

Bill accompanying the petition of William M. Brigham for legislation to establish a system of old age pensions. Legal Affairs. January 16.

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## Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Seven.

### AN ACT

To provide for a System of Old Age Pensions.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Any citizen of the Commonwealth,  
2 male or female, not already receiving a pension  
3 from the state or from a city or town, who has at-  
4 tained the age of sixty-five years or over, and who  
5 has paid a poll tax assessed upon himself in the  
6 Commonwealth in each one of not less than twenty-  
7 five years, whether such years were consecutive or  
8 not, or a sum in lieu thereof under the provisions of  
9 this act and who has not within five years been  
10 convicted of felony in any court of the Common-  
11 wealth or elsewhere, and who is certified, in writing,  
12 by any member of the general court or of the execu-  
13 tive council, or by a selectman, the mayor, a member  
14 of the city council, or the treasurer, auditor, city or  
15 town clerk of the city or town in which he lives, to  
16 be of good moral character and not addicted to the

17 excessive use of intoxicating liquors, shall, on appli-  
18 cation to the treasurer and receiver-general, be en-  
19 titled to receive for the remainder of his life a  
20 pension equivalent to three dollars a week, to be  
21 paid in quarterly payments by the treasurer and  
22 receiver-general: *provided*, that for the ten years  
23 preceding such application he shall have been a res-  
24 ident of the Commonwealth.

1 SECTION 2. The age of any such applicant for a  
2 pension shall be established by a certificate of bap-  
3 tism or by a register of birth with a city or town  
4 clerk, or in such other manner as shall be satisfac-  
5 tory to the treasurer and receiver-general.

1 SECTION 3. All poll taxes and all other moneys  
2 received by them in lieu thereof under the provisions  
3 of this act shall hereafter be paid into the treasury  
4 of the Commonwealth by the cities and towns, ex-  
5 cepting that the cities and towns may reserve one  
6 dollar from each poll tax for their own use.

1 SECTION 4. The amount of such annual pensions  
2 to be paid in any year shall be taken, so far as may  
3 be, from the amounts received by the treasurer and  
4 receiver-general for poll taxes and other moneys in  
5 lien thereof under the provisions of this act. He is  
6 hereby authorized and directed to annually before  
7 the first day of May fix the amount of a poll tax for  
8 that year, to be paid by those desiring to avail them-  
9 selves of the benefits of this act, at such a sum, not  
10 exceeding five dollars, as will approximately cover  
11 the amount so estimated of the pensions which will  
12 be payable in the following year. If the amount

13 thus derived from poll taxes and moneys received in  
14 lieu thereof is not sufficient to pay the said pensions  
15 in any year, the deficiency shall be paid out of the  
16 treasury of the Commonwealth.

1 SECTION 5. Section one of chapter twelve of the  
2 Revised Laws is hereby amended by striking out all  
3 of said section and inserting in place thereof the  
4 following:—*Section 1.* A poll tax of two dollars  
5 shall be assessed on every male inhabitant of the  
6 Commonwealth above the age of twenty years,  
7 whether a citizen of the United States or an alien,  
8 except pensioners under the provisions of section  
9 four of chapter \_\_\_\_\_ of the acts of the year  
10 nineteen hundred and seven, and except that every  
11 inhabitant, male or female, who may desire here-  
12 after to avail himself of the benefits of chapter  
13 \_\_\_\_\_ of the acts of the year nineteen hundred  
14 and seven may, in lieu of said poll tax of two dollars,  
15 pay the poll tax fixed by the treasurer and receiver-  
16 general under the provisions of section four of  
17 chapter \_\_\_\_\_ of the acts of the year nineteen  
18 hundred and seven, and all legal costs and charges  
19 which may accrue against any person in the collec-  
20 tion of his poll tax may be added to the amount of  
21 said tax, whether the inhabitant elects to pay the  
22 poll tax of two dollars, or the tax the amount of  
23 which is fixed by the treasurer and receiver-general  
24 according to the provisions of section four of said  
25 chapter.

1 SECTION 6. The payment by any male inhabitant  
2 of a poll tax assessed in this Commonwealth previ-  
3 ous to the passage of this act, according to the  
4 provisions of law then existing, shall be deemed a

5 payment within the provisions of this act, and any  
6 female inhabitant may, in lieu of the payment of  
7 any poll tax assessed prior to the passage of this  
8 act, pay to the treasurer of the city or town where  
9 she resides any sum which she may elect, for which  
10 she shall be given a suitable receipt, and which shall  
11 be paid by said city or town treasurer to said treas-  
12 urer and receiver-general and be credited to her  
13 account in determining her right to a pension under  
14 the provisions of this act in the proportion of two  
15 dollars for each such poll tax assessed prior to the  
16 passage of this act and subsequent to her arriving  
17 at the age of twenty years; but after the passage  
18 of this act no payment of any poll tax, except such  
19 as the treasurer and receiver-general is authorized  
20 to fix under the provisions of section four of this act,  
21 shall be deemed to entitle the person so paying to  
22 receive the benefits of this act.

1 SECTION 7. The treasurer and receiver-general is  
2 hereby authorized to employ such clerical assistance  
3 as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of  
4 this act, to prepare the necessary forms, and to  
5 make regulations for the payment of pensions as  
6 aforesaid. For these purposes he may expend from  
7 the treasury of the Commonwealth such a sum as  
8 may be necessary, not exceeding                    thou-  
9 sand dollars. The pensions hereby authorized to be  
10 paid shall begin to be paid on the first day of June  
11 in the year nineteen hundred and seven, and the pen-  
12 sion year shall begin on the first day of December  
13 in every year and end on the last day of November.

1 SECTION 8. This act shall take effect upon its  
2 passage.